



CIHR IRSC

## **Building the Life Foundation**

**Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)  
INSTITUTE OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, CHILD AND YOUTH HEALTH**

**IHDCYH Executive Summary 2001-2006**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Institute of Human Development Child and Youth Health (IHDCYH) is one of 13 institutes of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). In August 2001, the Institute embarked on a strategic planning process to set the direction and identify strategic research priorities for the next 5 years, and to target the actions that would position the Institute as an international leader.

## VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

**Vision, mission and values statements were confirmed through the planning process.**



### **Vision**

To ensure the best start in life for all Canadians and the achievement of their potential for optimal growth and development.

### **Mission**

To promote and facilitate research at the highest international standards in reproductive and developmental biology, pregnancy and birth, and the health and development of newborns, children, youth and their families.

### **Values**

- Leadership, innovation and excellence
- Multidisciplinary and international collaboration
- Partnership
- Inclusivity and outreach
- Ethics and integrity in all of our endeavours
- Respect for couples, parents, children, youth and the essential role of families and communities

## STRATEGIC RESEARCH PRIORITY THEMES

The Institute identified the following six strategic research priority themes for the next five years:

- 1 **Healthy gametes and great embryos**
- 2 **Reproductive aging**
- 3 **Fetal growth and preterm birth**
- 4 **Reducing the burden of congenital abnormalities**
- 5 **Developmental trajectories of children and youth**
- 6 **Causes, prevention and treatment of acute and chronic illness in children and youth**

## THE FIVE CIHR OVERARCHING GOALS

The Institute's strategic research priorities fit well within the five CIHR overarching goals. The Institute has developed specific goals to align directly with the CIHR goals.

- 1 **Building international leadership through national excellence in health research**  
Building investigator capacity
  - Ensure a sufficient number of investigators with interest and skills in a wide spectrum of disciplines and methodological approaches to conduct research relating to human development, reproductive and developmental biology, and newborn, child and youth health.
  - Establish training initiatives, co-sponsor New Emerging Team (NET) awards to build a critical mass of investigators in areas of strategic priority.
  - Establish international exchange programs.
- 2 **Integrating the biomedical, natural and social sciences, engineering, mathematics and the humanities**  
Building transdisciplinary teams in areas of emerging science
  - Establish transdisciplinary research teams in the following priority areas: healthy gametes and great embryos; reproductive aging; fetal growth and preterm birth; congenital abnormalities; developmental trajectories of children and youth; and causes, prevention and treatment of acute and chronic illness in children and youth
  - Initiate and co-sponsor NET programs that are focused, transdisciplinary and benefit maximally from newly and emerging trends in science and technology.
  - Integrate ethics into all aspects of Institute strategic priorities.

### 3 Improving the health status of vulnerable populations

Building the foundations of life

- Create, evaluate and apply knowledge of developmental origins of health disparities, including socioeconomic, ethnic and geographic factors. This will help in developing strategies to reduce or eliminate disparities, beginning with differences in fetal and infant mortality rates and extending to developmental outcomes as children mature.
- Examine factors leading to increased vulnerability of children during times of transition, such as birth and beginning school and adolescence, including emotional, behavioural conduct and social developmental difficulties and the subsequent effects of these difficulties upon adulthood.

### 4 Strengthening health research and the health system in the genomics era

Building from the cutting edge of bio-molecular research

- Create, evaluate and apply knowledge and technology to understand better the developmental and biological processes influencing the physical well-being and growth of fetuses, infants, children, and adolescents.
- Exploit and further develop biotechnology that is emerging from functional, structural and comparative genomics, proteomics, bioinformatics and advanced imaging and computer technology.
- Examine ethical and social issues relevant to genomics and post-genomic research and applications within the health system as related to human development, pregnancy and child and youth health.

### 5 Unique challenges

Building unique opportunities to provide inter-institutional leadership in research in pregnancy and child and youth health issues

Priority areas include:

- environment and health
- rural health
- substance use and abuse
- obesity and physical inactivity
- prevention of injury
- exposure to violence and development of violent behaviour





**Developing and advancing a robust research agenda, and building a strong infrastructure.**

The Institute will be targeting its actions and strategies into two major streams of activities:

- 1 developing and advancing a robust research agenda, and**
- 2 building a strong infrastructure.**

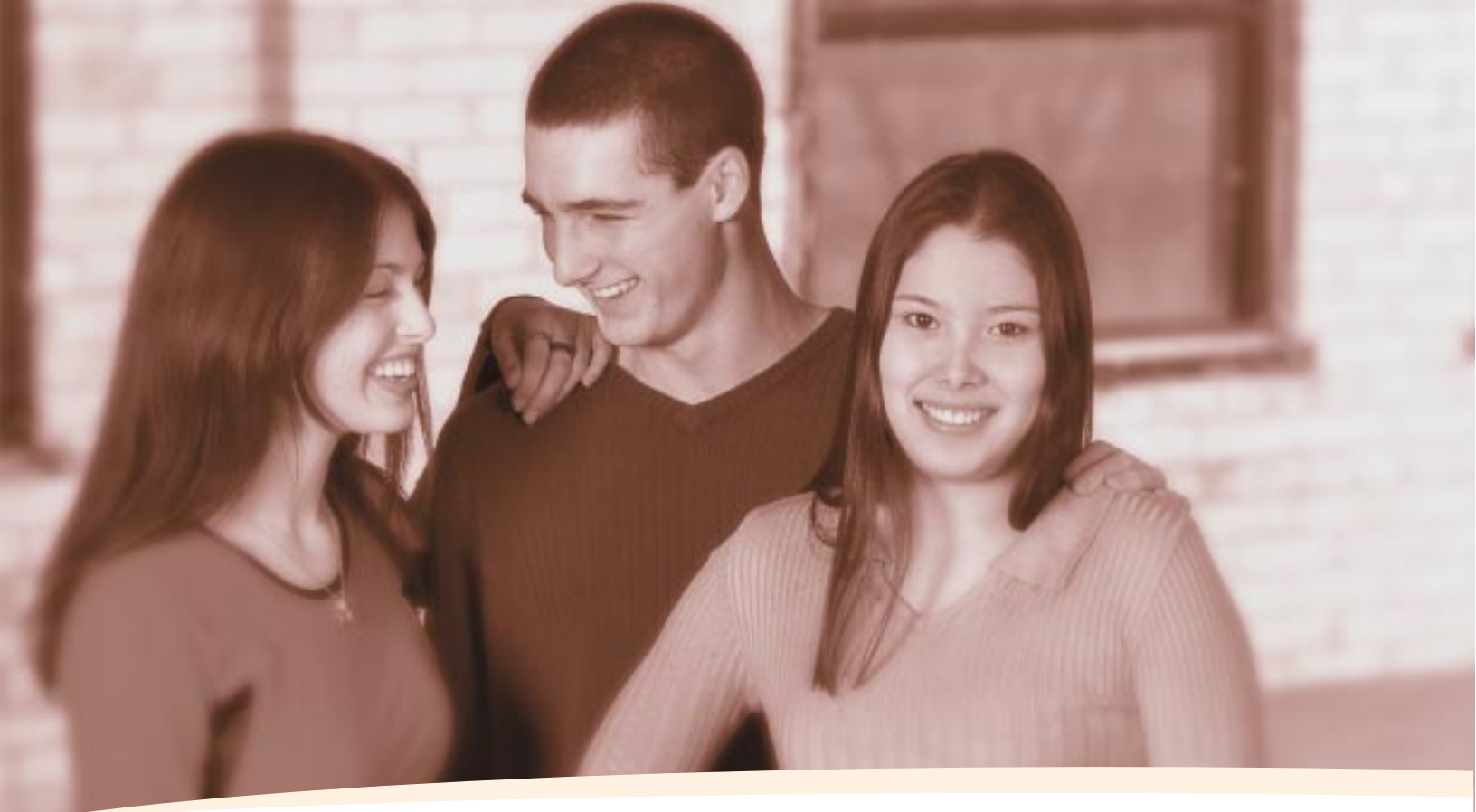
Two distinct groups of research initiatives will be supported: strategic research in which the Institute will take the lead; and investigator-initiated research, which the Institute will facilitate and support through various mechanisms, such as workshops and coalition building. The Institute has identified specific strategies to support both streams of activities and the two types of research initiatives. In addition, the Institute has proposed action plans for partnerships and alliances, research transfer, dissemination, policy and ethics that are critical to its success in advancing its strategic agenda.

Over the next eighteen months, Consensus Workshops will be conducted in each of the six strategic research areas. These will be pivotal in determining the focus and investment that is appropriate to targeted training, NETs or seed grants. The expected annual growth in funding for the CIHR Institutes will support one to two major Requests for Applications (RFAs) per year over the next five years. Each RFA should yield 3 to 4 successful multidisciplinary awards of \$500,000 to \$1 million per year for five years.

Five year implementation plans, based on a number of key planning assumptions, have been developed for both strategic initiatives and operating initiatives.

The Institute is committed to monitoring and measuring its progress and achievements against its goals and objectives. Initial measures have been identified and others will be developed as a requirement of the Consensus Workshops.

This first strategic plan has been developed as a framework to guide development of the Institute. The strategic plan will be reviewed on an annual basis and revised as necessary. The plan should continually include a three to five year horizon and provide sufficient flexibility to respond to opportunities and challenges which present themselves to the Institute and its members.



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